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Fig. 9. Terrace street, Aztec style.

361 though the village contains 662 house sites, it does not have the compact or crowded
 351 appearance of some Mexican towns. For the most part, the houses are separated
 from each other by gardens, patios, corrals, and sometimes milpas. These are en-
 closed by low-lying stone walls which do not block the view from the street and
 which permit overhanging trees to shade the street. Only a few houses in the center
 are built contiguously in Spanish style and are enclosed by high, concealing walls.

[342] Tepoztlán has the traditional square plaza around which are grouped the more
 361 important public buildings. On one side of the plaza is the small public park, com-
 367 plete with bandstand, shade trees, benches, and brick walks. The paved road, which
 363 runs along the other side of the park, ends at this point, and here, too, is the last
 494 stop on the bus line.

344 North of the park is the courthouse which houses the office of the president, secre-
 tary, and other local officials. A guard in soldier's uniform is frequently seen pacing
 up and down before the steps. The new school house was built next to the court-
 346 house and is now one of the important edifices of the center. Between these two
 347 buildings and the plaza itself is the Portales, a semi-enclosed street where most of
 366 the stores and permanent vending places are located. The street has a roof sup-
 ported by columns and provides merchants and buyers protection from the sun and
 rain.



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Fig. 10. A street, resembling a dried-out stream bed.

rain. To the east is the large cathedral and convent, the most imposing and handsome buildings in the village. The convent is now a historical monument and is visited by tourists. Between the cathedral and the plaza is a row of whitewashed, flat-roofed stores. West of the plaza is a dirt road leading to the lower part of the village, to the cemetery, and to the village of Ixcatepec and more stores. The mills and some of the finer old houses of former *caciques* are also located on the plaza.

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This part of the village presents the appearance and some of the hustle and bustle of a town, but the streets off the center are uniformly quiet and rustic and stamp Tepoztlán as a rural village. (See Fig. 12.) But even the center does not give the impression of an active, thriving community. The park, plaza, and public buildings show evidence of chronic neglect. Only for the annual Carnival is the area well swept and the main fountain cleaned. The park is seldom occupied by the native population and, except when there are tourists, usually looks abandoned.

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The stores are small and dark and have unattractive displays. On market days the few vendors and the small variety of goods available betray little commercial activity and a general air of decline. (See Fig. 13.)

The streets just off the plaza bear names indicated by placards. As is customary in Mexico the street names commemorate important historical events and outstanding local figures. Thus in Tepoztlán we find such street names as The Fifth of May, Aniceto Villamar, and No Reelección.* Only those houses in the center are

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* Some of the street names are in Náhuatl and refer to pre-Hispanic figures, for example, Avenida del Tepozteco and Netzahualcoyotl.

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sequence of a national campaign by the Minister of Education. Baseball, soccer, basketball, and volleyball were taught by the school and had immediate appeal among the youth. From the first, soccer was most popular. In 1929 a sports club of 22 soccer players, all from the three center barrios, was organized. The popularity of the game developed slowly until 1930, when the number of enthusiasts increased sharply because of the efforts of a new school director. Between 1934 and 1936, at the time that the road was being built, there were as many as 15 soccer teams. Even the religious barrio of Santa Cruz had its team. This enthusiasm lasted for about three years. In 1939 no soccer team existed and the interest in the sport lapsed for a few years.

There are now five teams, four in the large, center barrios and one in the small barrio of Los Reyes. The teams play against each other with the traditional barrio spirit of competition. They also play against teams from Cuernavaca and other nearby towns. There is no athletic field in the village, and the center teams play in the large yard of the Cathedral while the Los Reyes team rents a field. The scarcity of level land makes it impossible to use any of the communal land, and the young men are thinking of buying a plot of land for an athletic field. The only equipment bought by the team is the ball. About half of the players own special soccer shoes; the other half play barefoot or in huaraches.¹⁴

The teams usually play to an audience of small boys. Adults are disinterested in games or actively disapprove of them, and parents do not permit their daughters to attend. When teams from other villages play, only a few girls from the center barrios come to watch. The skill and triumphs of the players are appreciated by a handful of people; there are no fans and there is no community spirit in connection with this sport.

In 1947, when a Cultural Mission was in Tepoztlán, there was an attempt made to stimulate wider interest in games by organizing an inter village competition and appointing committees of *madrinas* or godmothers for each team. The *madrinas* came dressed in white and bearing flowers for each team, but the audience remained as small as ever.

The advantages of the cooperative action involved in team playing, and the unifying effect of a strong common interest, are experienced only by the actual members of the teams. Small as this group is, their experience in cooperation is of some significance in so highly individualistic a village as Tepoztlán.

Recreational activities in Tepoztlán were further diversified with the opening of a billiard room in 1935. This was another point of conflict between the older people and the younger men of the village. The poolroom was quickly characterized as a breeding place of drunkenness and bad habits. But despite their objections, pool became popular among the boys of all the barrios. When boys began to stay out of school to play, parents forced the local administration to ban poolrooms from admitting boys under eighteen years of age. There are now two poolrooms, one with

¹⁴ A professional soccer player from Mexico City admired the skill of young Tepoztláners in kicking the hard ball with their bare toes.

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[652] latter had control of the forests. The municipal president maintained that the commissariat should not have authority in matters of forestry. There was a certain amount of hatred between them, though not declared. The council was seeking funds to meet the outstanding expenses which were incurred within the municipal administration. Seeing that there were no sources of revenue, the council voted to call together on a certain day all the charcoal makers and to ask them for their cooperation; that is, that they should give one day's work to cut down trees and cut them into logs, so that they might make charcoal kilns for the benefit of the council, and that the profits from those kilns would go into the municipal treasury.

[652] All agreed to accept and to meet on the appointed day in the appointed place to cut the trees. The charcoal makers only cut about ten trees, which yielded little money for the council's purposes. There was nothing to do about it but give in, because only enough money came of it to pay the person who watched over the furnace when it was burning. The municipal president despaired more than ever, because he saw that the money coming into the municipal treasury was barely enough to pay the few miserable salaries of the township employees. Not even the police could afford three men to keep watch over the peace.

The municipal president did not give up. He wanted to follow faithfully what he had promised. He began to work to improve the public market, soliciting federal aid. When it came to the ears of the dwellers in the town that there was a question of building the market, some of them immediately went to the municipal president's office; they made it clear that if such a market were to be completed, their properties in that vicinity must be respected. The municipal president demanded documentation to substantiate the true ownership of the small pieces of land which were within the property belonging to the township. Most of them presented their documents, and they reached a settlement that it would be preferable to pick the property by lot, in agreement with the owners. And, together with the council, they would finish the rooms which would be used for trade. As was said before, all this reached the stage of study but nothing more was ever done.

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[653] About the month of August of the second year of his administration, Fulgencio Campos admitted that he was failing in his intention to bring about some improvement for the town. He decided to play his last card and pave the public gardens. This time he interviewed not the civil authorities but the military. It happened at the time that federal workers were within the township breaking stone for the highway. Campos interviewed the chief of the military zone and set forth all the reasons for his aspirations and his desire to leave some work for his people. The military chief agreed that a few of the trucks which were being used to carry stone for the highway should be left at the municipal president's office so that they might be utilized in the paving of the public gardens. The trucks arrived right away, and the council tried to raise funds to pay for the sand and cement. The council agreed that the work should be completed after the end of the rainy season, that is, about the month of October, so that the rains would not slow up the work of the paving.

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682 The day of the national celebrations, that is, the sixteenth of September, the comptroller, Saturnino Córdova, who was commissioned to list the animals at the slaughterhouse, got drunk with some friends. Most of his acquaintances were men in the meat business.

On the seventeenth it was learned that Córdova had disappeared and could not be found anywhere. About five in the afternoon a woman reported a corpse in a ravine near

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the municipal slaughterhouse. The authorities took the corpse to the Town Hall for identification, because birds of prey had already mutilated the face and part of the body. The investigations began, and finally it was known that Córdova had been murdered inside the slaughterhouse and his body thrown into the ravine. 175
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At that time there was also an investigation going on in the office of the under secretary of the Ministerio Público for cattle stealing. It was discovered that the lost animals had been slaughtered in the municipal slaughterhouse, and that the animals had been stolen by the same persons who had murdered Córdova because he was trying to discover the thieves. The council aided Córdova's family with burial and what was necessary to settle a few other expenses. The council proceeded to call the alternate for the comptroller's office, to take charge of the post which Córdova had been filling. [685]

In a short time the cement necessary for the paving of the public gardens was bought. Only half of the job could be done, and this only with the councillors giving a part of their pay. An additional sum of fifty pesos, which had been given by a woman toward the pipe line for drinking water, also went into the paving of the public gardens and the fixing of benches. The president, on leaving his post, got into a suit over this fifty pesos: the people said he had stolen it. 175
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ADMINISTRATION OF 1943-44

On the first of January, 1943, the only candidates who had taken part in the elections of the first Sunday in December were inaugurated: Municipal President, Emilio Martínez, Comptroller, Benito Vargas; and Attorney General, Carlos Quiroz. In the first council meeting they decided to increase the taxes of the township for the purpose of town improvements. All those who take office as presidents are always eager to improve their town. The council in agreement with the Commissariat of the Ejidos, who had some funds for the development of the forests, took those funds and bought the necessary cement and sand to finish the paving of the public gardens. And the work was finished in a few weeks. [666]
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There came a fiesta at which people drank too much, and as this municipal president, Emilio Martínez, had many friends, who were constantly inviting him to have a drink, he drank all that day. When evening came and it was getting dark, he was completely drunk. Upon getting into the bus he met another man who was also far gone, and they started a commotion. They went from words to blows and from blows to kicks. When Martínez saw the other man stretched out, he began to kick him until his relatives and the police intervened. Of course, the man was taken to jail, and although he had received the blows from Martínez, he was fined five pesos. 175
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Martínez had a son who was completing his military service. In a short time stories began to circulate to the effect that young Mexican men were going to be sent to war, which was then at its height. Undoubtedly they hinted this to Martínez. According to the story they tell, he organized a band of bad fellows, and on the Sunday when his son was en route to the barracks this band attacked the vehicle in which he was riding. Martínez claimed that his son had been kidnapped by bandits, but the matter did not end there. The state governor gave orders to the chief of the judicial police, and one day when Martínez was in the city he was apprehended and taken to the state penitentiary at the disposition of the governor of the state. As soon as the other members of the council learned that Martínez was being held in prison, they called the comptroller, as was provided in the law, to take the office of municipal president for seventy days. The comp-